REMARKS

The Office Action of September 6, 2007, has been reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Claims 18 and 19 have been added. No new matter has been added. Thus, claims 1-19 are pending. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6, 7-8, 9-10, 12 and 14-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Allen *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,445,509, hereinafter Allen '509). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons. In order to reject a claim as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102, a single prior art reference must teach every aspect of the claimed invention. MPEP § 706.02.

Claim 1 is directed towards a melt-blow head comprised of a rectilinear row of nozzle bores arranged in a nozzle bar and specifically recites among other features that "the nozzle bar is fixed in a defined position with respect to the slot-plates and removable therefrom in a vertical direction."

Allen '509 is directed to a meltblowing die assembly with a preassembled die tip assembly. *See Abstract.* The meltblowing die of Allen '509 possesses an internal valve with an external actuator. By programming the valve actuator, the valve can be opened or closed to control the flow of polymer melt. *See col. 2, lines 33 -51.* Contrary to the assertion of the Office Action, Allen '509 fails to teach or disclose each and every feature of claim 1. For example, Allen '509 lacks a teaching or disclosure of a nozzle bar that is "removable in a vertical direction." As is apparent from Fig. 5 and the accompanying description, the structure identified by the Office Action as a nozzle bar, die tip 13, sits directly below a large number of fixed components in the meltblowing die assembly of Allen '509. In such a configuration, the only manner in which die tip 13 may be removed is downward as the vast majority of components including the die body 11, valve assembly 12, and valve actuator 15, are all interconnected and attached and positioned above the die tip 13. *See Fig. 5.* "The die tip assembly 13 is mounted to the underside of the die body 11 and covers air chamber 39." *Col. 5, lines 1-3.* Thus, if die tip 13 is to be removed, the configuration of Allen '509 requires removal downward from the "underside" of the assembly, certainly not in a

"vertical direction" as recited in claim 1 of the present application. Neither Allen '141 nor other references of record cure the deficiencies of Allen '509.

Dependent claims 2-4, 6, 7-8, 9-10, 12, and 14-17 are allowable for all the reasons given above concerning base claim 1, and further in view of their specific recitations that have not been shown to be in (or obvious from) the art of record.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5, 11, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Allen '509 in view of Allen (U.S. Pat. No.6,210,141, hereinafter Allen '141). Dependent claims 5, 11, and 13 are allowable for all the reasons given above concerning base claim 1, and further in view of their specific recitations that have not been shown to be in (or obvious from) the art of record.

New Claims

New claim 18 is directed to a melt-blow head similar to the melt-blow head of claim 1. Thus, claim 18 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Further, claim 18 recites among other features that "the lateral inlet and the redirecting means being housed in the nozzle bar" and that "the lateral inlet is connected to a melt pipe through a removable connector, the removable connector positioned and configured to be removable in a vertical direction." Allen '509 fails to teach or disclose these features. In Allen '509, any structure that could be arguably identified as a lateral inlet or a redirecting means as recited in claim 18 is certainly not "housed in the nozzle bar." *See Fig. 5.* Instead, if there is a lateral inlet and/or a redirecting means disclosed in Allen '509, these features are housed in the die body 11, a structure distinct from the nozzle bar as admitted in the Office Action. *See O.A.*

Claim 18 also recites that "the lateral inlet is connected to a melt pipe through a removable connector, the removable connector positioned and configured to be removable in a vertical direction." Allen '509 fails to teach or disclose a "removable connector positioned and configured to be removable in a vertical direction" as the removable connector 17 identified by the Office Action is only removable, if at all, in a horizontal direction as it is screwed together as

is apparent from Fig. 5. Hence, it is a physical impossibility to remove connector 17 in a vertical direction as recited in claim 18.

New claim 19 is directed to a melt-blow head similar to the melt-blow head of claim 1 and 18. Thus claim 19 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 and 18. Claim 19 also recites that "no feeding pipes are positioned above the nozzle bar." Both Allen '509 and Allen '141 fail to disclose this feature as portions of the feeding pipes in both of these references "are positioned above the nozzle bar." *See, for example, Fig. 5 of Allen '509 and Fig. 2 of Allen '141.*

CONCLUSION

All rejections having been addressed, Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicits prompt notification of the same. However, if for any reason the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for allowance or there are any questions, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at (202)824-3128.

Respectfully submitted,

BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.

Dated this 6th day of March, 2008

By: /David R. Gerk/
David R. Gerk, Reg. No.56, 901

1100 13th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005-4051
Tel: (202) 824-3000
Fax: (202) 824-3001

RSK/DRG/sgs